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SUBJECT: GOMA NOTES 03/07/08 - GOMA PROCESS: ABBE MALUMALU ARRIVES

1. (SBU) Summary: Goma process talks resumed again March 7 in Goma with the full CNDP delegation present. No sooner had the CNDP announced it could proceed no further unless National Coordinator Abbe Malumalu was present, did Malumalu call to say he had stepped off a plane in Goma and agreed to join the discussions. Abbe Malumalu proposed a day off in order for the CNDP to develop a reasoned response to the issues at hand, so that these could be resolved and the Joint Committee envisioned by the Goma accords could be established by decree. Abbe Malumalu agreed to an EU proposal to journey to Kiroliro in the interim, and the group proceeded by road early the following day. End summary.

2. (SBU) On March 7 at 0900, unsurprisingly, the CNDP asked for yet another postponement of the Goma process talks. Since the conference room at MONUC-Goma was reserved for the Nairobi process JMG task force (celebrated for their marathon durations), and since the CNDP team was attending the ILLCE leadership workshop at the Karibu Hotel, it was decided that the talks would resume at the Karibu during the workshop's lunch break at 1300. The meeting was convened with the full six-member CNDP delegation (political - Rene Abandi, Jean-Desire Muiti and Bertrand Bisimwa; and military, including Major Seraphin Mirindi).

3. (SBU) Vice Admiral Didier Etumba, the GDRC delegation head, proceeded to outline the agenda: position allocations, the CNDP's proposals for wording of a new presidential decree (a pending agenda issue that had not been raised on at the previous session), and voting procedures within the Joint Commission (JC). The CNDP replied by saying that its suggestions re: the basic structure (sectoral vs. geographic) had not been taken into account. Cue to wrangling.

4. (SBU) The CNDP then announced that it could proceed no further on any of these questions unless recently-named Goma process National Coordinator Abbe Apollinaire Muholangu Malumalu was present. Then, theatrically, EU representative Jean-Michel Dumont's phone rang, and he was able to announce to the attendees that Abbe Malumalu had just stepped off a plane in Goma. Dumont (who was co-chairing the meeting in the absence of MONUC's John Almstrom) urged Abbe Malumalu to join the Karibu discussions, and he agreed, though he had prior commitments, so the meeting was adjourned until 1500.

5. (SBU) Abbe Malumalu arrived shortly after 1500, greeted those present, and then went into private conversations with the CNDP's Abandi. This lasted until 1630 when the meeting reconvened in the hotel's Karisimbi room.

6. (SBU) Etumba proceeded to review the agenda again, and Abbe Malumalu (who had only been briefed very cursorily by Dumont and Etumba and then by Abandi) proceeded to propose that there should be a day off in order for the CNDP to develop a reasoned response to

the issues at hand, so that these could be resolved and the JC could be established by decree. Abbe Malumalu said he would extend his stay in Goma until March 10, making March 8 an "informal" day in which off-the-record consultations could occur, and the meeting would resume on March 9 and would reach closure on the issues at hand. Abbe Malumalu could then take an agreement, including the nominations of JC members, back to Kinshasa on March 10 and have it processed into a formal decree.

¶7. (SBU) The CNDP readily agreed to this, but the visible relief of most concerned was spoiled by Etumba, who insisted on summarizing the "points on which there is already agreement". Since the first of these was the question of the JC structure, and since the CNDP felt very strongly that its views had been disregarded, wrangling resumed. The question of the structure was debated, with Abbe Malumalu (who was new to these discussions) defending the sectoral subcommittee view, while the CNDP insisted on a geographic approach. Abbe Malumalu finally cut off discussion, and the meeting eventually ended with agreement to reconvene at MONUC March 9 at 1000.

¶8. (SBU) In side-bar talks following the adjournment, Dumont got Abbe Malumalu to agree to a journey to Kirolirwe on the next day. Since a helicopter could not be scrambled in time, the team, including Dumont and Weeks for the Facilitation, Abbe Malumalu, the three CNDP political reps and Major Mirindi proceeded by road at 7 a.m.

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